

Fort Washakie Building #1
Washakie Street
Fort Washakie
Fremont County
Wyoming

HABS NO. WY-107-I

HABS
WYO,
7-FOWA
1-I-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
P. O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HABS
WYO,
7-FOWA,
1-I-Historic Name

The present name of the building is Fort Washakie Building #1, headquarters for the Bureau of Indian Affairs on the Wind River Indian Reservation. When first constructed by the military between 1877⁴ and 1881, the building was used as a chapel and housed the fort library. In the 1890s it was used as a school and a gymnasium as well as a library. Officially, by both the military and the BIA, it has always been given a number rather than a name.

The building has always been owned by the federal government. From its construction until 1909 it was administered by the United States Army as part of Fort Washakie. In 1909 the fort and the building were turned over to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior.

Location

Fort Washakie Building #1 is located in the town of Fort Washakie, Fremont County, Wyoming. The town is located at the confluence of the South and the North Forks of the Little Wind River. Fort Washakie is some fifteen miles northwest of the town of Lander, Wyoming, via highway 287.

Within the town Building #1 is centrally located at the intersection of Washakie Street and Second Street. Both streets split to encircle the building, thus Building #1 has no adjacent structures and is surrounded on all sides by streets.

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Present Use

The building is used presently as the headquarters for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Wind River Indian Reservation. Although occupied, the building has been declared unsafe by Carroll Martell (North 10 Port Street, Spokane, Washington, 99201), an architect employed to evaluate the building. According to Martell's report, dated October 13, 1980, the building has no foundation, both the load-bearing walls and the roof are weak, the plumbing and heating systems are obsolete, and the electrical system presents a serious hazard. Martell estimates that correcting only the worst conditions of the building would cost at least \$470,000, and possible much more.

The decision has been made to demolish the building, probably in 1984.

Significance

The architecture of Washakie Building #1 is not particularly significant. However, it does represent the type of substantial stone building constructed on the frontier near the turn of the century. It is a solid, practical building with virtually no ornamentation.

Historically, the building represents the beginning of permanence on the Wind River Indian Reservation. The origins of the outpost of Fort Washakie give us an idea of the importance of permanence, for initially it was a "movable" fort.

The first military post in the Wind River Valley was located at the present town of Lander, some fifteen miles south of present-day

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Fort Washakie. This original outpost, named Camp C. C. Augur, was established on June 28, 1869. Reorganization in March, 1870 resulted in -- among other things -- the renaming of the camp to Camp Brown. In June, 1871, Camp Brown was moved from its Lander site some fifteen miles north to the present town site of Fort Washakie. The buildings at old Camp Brown were destroyed or dismantled for use elsewhere.

Buildings on the new site were first constructed of logs or adobe, but in 1877 stone masons constructed the first stone buildings. These stone buildings -- of which Building #1 was one -- are particularly significant, for in the transient world of the West they stated that the outpost of Camp Brown was permanent, and built to last. This fact became more apparent when the name Camp Brown was changed to Fort Washakie -- in honor of the Shoshone Chief Washakie -- on December 30, 1878.

Perhaps as a result of this military upgrading, Building #1 was constructed. It was L-shaped, and one wing housed the fort chapel, while the other contained the fort library. In the 1890s the building became secular, in the sense that the building housed the school, a gymnasium, and the library.

During this military period some notable Americans visited the fort, and no doubt Building #1. Perhaps the most prominent was President Chester Arthur, who with his entourage visited in 1883, on his way to the Teton country and Yellowstone.

After the military abandoned Fort Washakie in 1909, the Bureau of Indian Affairs took title to Building #1. Just when they made the building their headquarters is unknown, but it is safe to say that much of the significance of the building derives from its role as the

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headquarters for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. For most of the century the Shoshone and Arapahoe peoples have conducted their business with the federal government within the walls of this building. Although there are no large meeting rooms within the structure, it is safe to say that many important decisions concerning the relationship of the federal government to the Indians of the Wind River Indian Reservation have been hammered out in this building.

Date of Erection

Research at the Federal Record Center, Denver, the University of Wyoming archives, the Wyoming State archives in Cheyenne, and in the Fort Washakie-Lander area has not revealed the exact year of construction. Fremont County tax records do not exist, since the building was on the Wind River Indian Reservation. There is no cornerstone extant,

We can approximate the date of erection from the evidence contained in a document and a map. The document, housed in the University of Wyoming archives Fort Washakie file, states that "the first stone quarters were erected in 1877 by Dave and Jack Williamson and their father." A national archives map (copy in the Wyoming State archives, Cheyenne) drawn in 1881 lists two stone buildings completed, one of which is the original Building #1. Therefore, we can assume that the building was constructed between 1877 and 1881.

Original and Subsequent Owners

Fort Washakie Building #1 has always been owned by the United

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States government. It was constructed by and occupied by the United States Army, Department of War. Then on March 30, 1909 the Army abandoned Fort Washakie, transferring ownership of the post and military reservation to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior. Fort Washakie Building #1 has been the property of the Bureau of Indian Affairs from 1909 to the present date.

Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure

See section on Significance.

Architect

Unknown. Since this was a plain, unadorned L-shaped stone building, it is possible that no architect was employed for the design and construction. Probably the design was provided by the United States Army, and local contractors were responsible for construction.

Architectural Information

Although the accompanying HABS standards photographs will give a sense of the architecture, some description should be given.

The interior, remodelled in the late 1940s, can be termed basic box architecture. It is essentially a number of offices, divided for privacy and convenience. A central hall divides the building (see HABS photograph). The architecture is rather non-descript and without ornamentation. Ceilings consist of suspended tile, door frames have streamline trim, the walls are of textured plaster, and the floors are carpeted.

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The original exterior of the building is cut stone. It can best be described as coarsed-ashlar stonework with grapevine joints. The window sills and lintels are cut and tooled stone. Windows in the original building are one-over-one double hung. They are wooden, but aluminum storm windows have been added. The wood shingle roof is moderately hipped with flared eaves. To the left of center is a small cupola, topped by an interesting weather vane. In earlier years the cupolar housed a bell, but today the bell is replaced by a town siren.

In the 1940s a major addition was made to the original building which gives the building its present dimensions. The addition was wood frame rather than stone, with plastered walls. However, to maintain some architectural integrity, the original stone wall on the side of the building was extended some 35 feet. This addition, as far as we can tell, was cosmetic. The addition can be easily seen, since portland cement was used rather than lime groat, and the window sills and lintels are poured concrete rather than stone. The windows on the newer addition are hopper windows, with horizontal sliding-aluminum storm windows on the outside.

Perhaps the most interesting and puzzling architectural feature was the change in the roof. The original roof, as seen in turn of the century photographs, was peaked. However, photographs dating from the 1930s show the present moderately/hipped roof. Just when and why the roof was reconstructed has not been determined.

Floor Plans

Submitted.

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Exterior and Interior Features of Note

Nothing on the interior. The cupola topped by a unique weather vane is the most interesting exterior feature. The weather vane prominently shows an Indian astride a horse with a drawn bow sighting an arrow toward the sky.

Bibliography and References

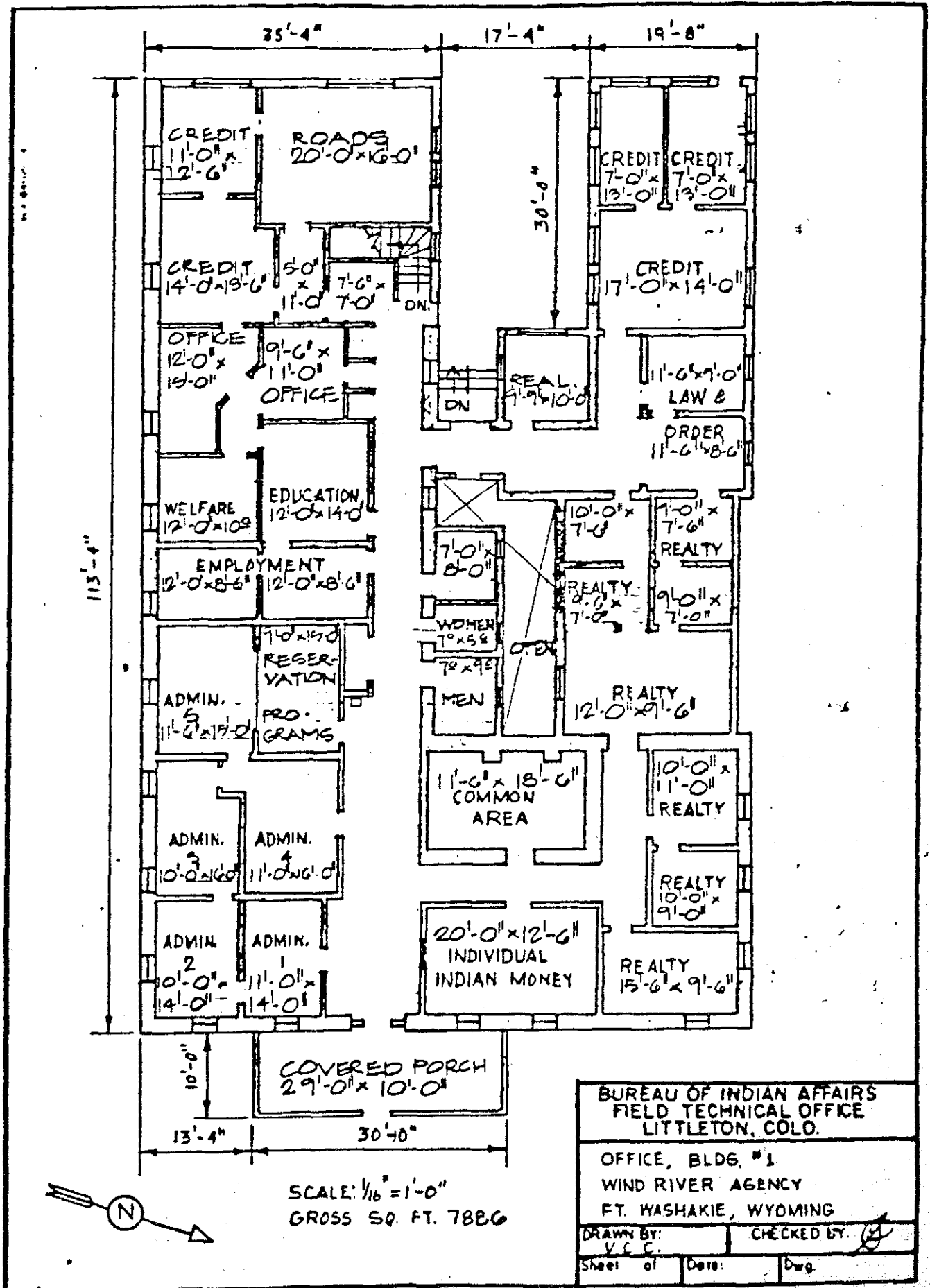
A. Secondary Sources. Secondary sources were of very little use for this documentation, but two should be listed:

Frazer, Robert W. Forts of the West: Military Forts and Presidios and Posts Commonly Called Forts West of the Mississippi River to 1898. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965.

Hwbard, Grace Raymond. Washakie. Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1930.

B. Primary Sources. Primary sources provided most of the information for this report. The Western History Research Center, University of Wyoming, contains considerable information in a file on Fort Washakie. The Federal Record Center, Denver, holds the Bureau of Indian Affairs records on Fort Washakie (Record Group 75). The most useful information is contained in three boxes entitled "Correspondence Concerning Agency Buildings, 1908-1941."

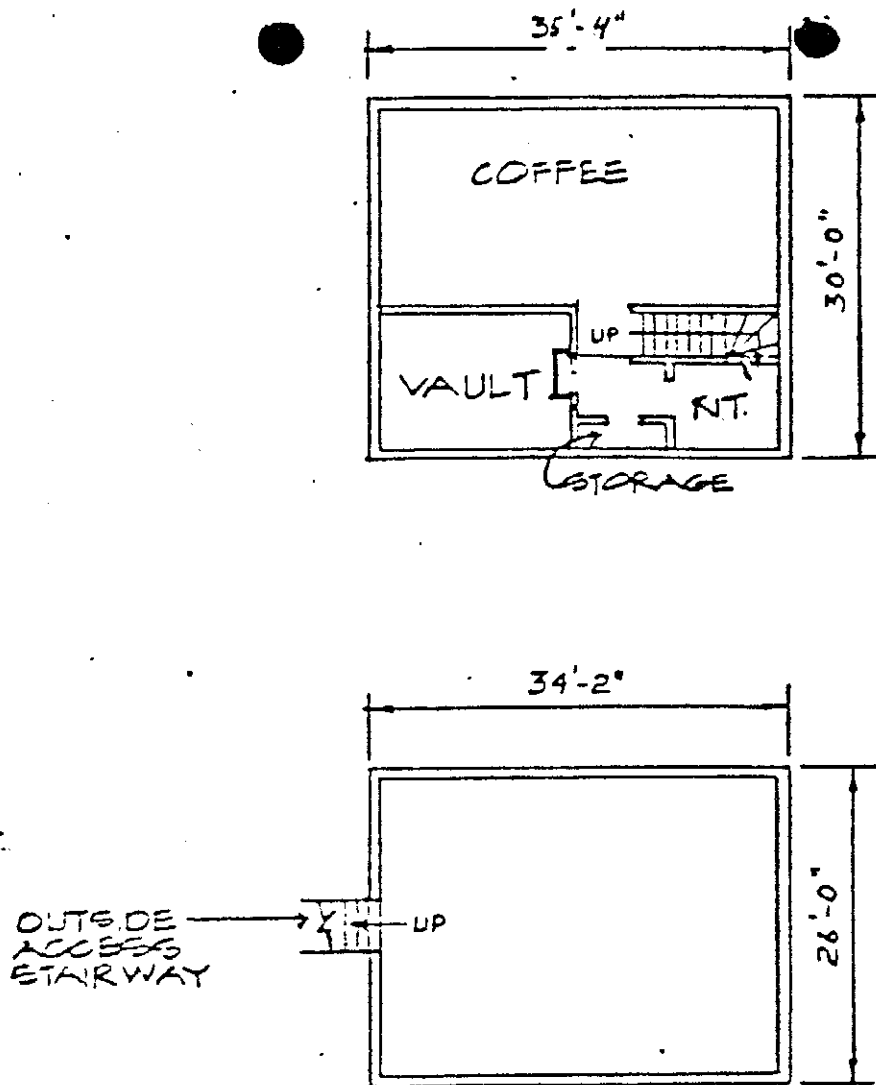
The Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, contains many entries for Fort Washakie. The most useful for this report was "Maps and plans of Fort Washakie" (purchased from the National Archives and Record Service). The Wyoming Recreation Commission, Historical Division, Cheyenne, has some information on the fort, including the Fort Washakie nomination for the National Register, done in 1969. Additional information was obtained through interviews at the fort and at Lander with persons knowledgeable about Fort Washakie.



BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
FIELD TECHNICAL OFFICE
LITTLETON, COLO.

OFFICE, BLDG. #1
WIND RIVER AGENCY
FT. WASHAKIE, WYOMING

DRAWN BY: V.C.C. CHECKED BY: [Signature]
Sheet of Date: Dwg.



BASEMENTS
 SCALE $\frac{1}{4}'' = 1'-0''$
 GROSS SQ. FT. 1913



BASEMENTS	1948 SQ. FT.
MAIN FLOOR	7885 SQ. FT.
TOTAL	9833 SQ. FT.

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